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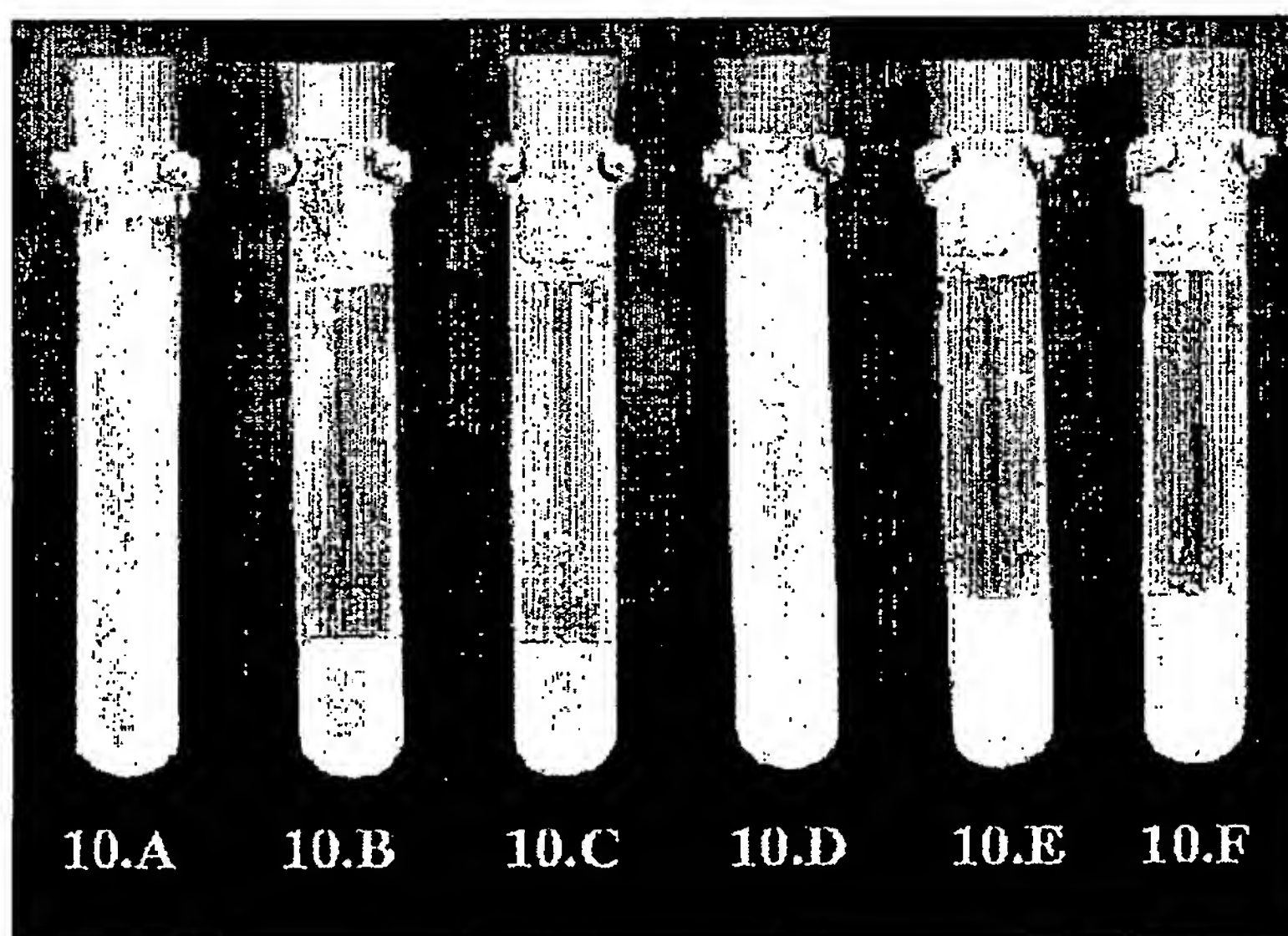
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(54) Title: **STIMULANT SENSITIVE FLOCCULATION AND CONSOLIDATION**



(57) Abstract: The present invention relates to methods for the separation of materials from heterogeneous fluids and provides a means of effecting stimulant-sensitive flocculation and consolidation of solid suspensions within a liquid medium. Specifically, the present invention provides a method of controlling the state of a suspension of solid particles in a liquid, including applying to the suspension a stimulus adapted to control inter-particle forces between the solid particles. The stimulus is reversibly operable to control attraction and/or repulsion. Means of consolidating a sediment bed and of separating the resultant liquids-rich and solids-rich phases are also within the ambit of the invention.

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